



INTERNATIONAL
COUNCIL FOR OPEN AND
DISTANCE EDUCATION



Annual Report

2024



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Greetings from the ICDE President

Kia ora (“Life to you!”)

The forces of change move at different speeds. Some like Generative Artificial Intelligence sweep across rapidly, bringing chaos alongside promise (some exaggerated, some all too real) and requiring swift attention. Others, like the gradual erosion of ‘distance education’ and the almost universal move toward more open practices, take place more insidiously. The ICDE community is extremely well placed to monitor and respond to – and perhaps even embrace and reshape - these and other changes that affect all of our member institutions.

In 2024, the ICDE Board and Secretariat met to draft a new Strategic Plan. Aware of international trends fuelled by technological and pedagogical shifts, emphasis is now placed on the ultimate purpose that unites ICDE members: “Together, we shape inclusive, scalable, and sustainable education.” Our ambitions, practices, research, and conversations must centre on these ultimate considerations which are lock-step with those that have always concerned open and distance education: How can we reach as many learners as possible with efficient, quality, and meaningful study opportunities? This new, or rather *extended*, purpose statement embraces those other institutions now eagerly adopting open and distance education practices using different terminology.

The international collegiality of ICDE remains one of its major benefits. The Leadership Summit in Geneva, hosted by Globethics, is a case in point. Educational leaders from 35 countries came together to discuss one of the most important changes to higher education in decades. Just how do we respond to the charging elephant that is GenAI? The policy report *Navigating the Future of Higher Education with AI*, a policy-level output from the Leadership Summit, demonstrates the value of



international partnership. The Leadership Summit also witnessed the formal launch of the ICDE Technology Innovation Network - TIN - ably led by Dr Julie Lindsay of the University of Southern Queensland. Such member-initiated activities are real examples of the sort of international networking ICDE is known for.

Of course, the successes and developments of 2024 reflect the efforts of the Secretariat, supported by the Board and Control Committee. The ICDE membership is expertly served by, in words proudly acknowledged in the Strategic Plan, “a mighty team” led by a Secretary General whose energetic and enthusiastic representation of ICDE is second only to her international reputation as a champion of inclusive, scalable, and sustainable education. We owe Torunn Gjelsvik, Secretary General of ICDE, our ongoing thanks as the adventure that is ICDE moves forward another calendar year. The Board also changed in 2024 as we welcomed Professor Mpine Makoe, and Dr Andrea Inamorato.

Aware of international trends fuelled by technological and pedagogical shifts, emphasis is now placed on the ultimate purpose that unites ICDE members: “Together, we shape inclusive, scalable, and sustainable education.”

Mark Nichols, ICDE President

Our ongoing thanks, also, are extended to the Norwegian Government for their continuous support of ICDE.

On a personal note, as we turn our focus toward 2025, I look forward to welcoming you with a ‘kia ora!’ to Aotearoa New Zealand for the 30th ICDE World Conference in November. Meanwhile, please take the time to enjoy the triumphs and achievements of ICDE in 2024.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Nichols'.

Mark Nichols
President of the International Council for Open and Distance Education

Reflections from the ICDE Secretary General

Shaping strategies for unknown futures

As we reflect on ICDE's 85th anniversary in 2023, we now turn our gaze to the horizon of 2024 and beyond. This year marks a pivotal moment in our organization's journey, as we collaboratively crafted a new four-year strategy that will guide us towards complex futures. One certainty emerged from our collective efforts: educational ecosystems must transform across sectors and borders, and ICDE has a critical role to play in this transformation.

For 85 years, ICDE has been advocating for education and learning opportunities that are open and accessible to all through flexible formats and appropriate technologies. The terminology in use has changed a lot over the years, from correspondence, to distance, open, flexible and digital education. Today, we embrace a diverse lexicon that includes hybrid, hy-flex, smart education, and stackable learning – all reflecting our commitment to flexibility and innovation.

Our Global Advocacy Campaign, spearheaded by member-led regional task forces, has illuminated the need for contextualized messaging that speaks to local stakeholders and addresses regional needs. This insight guided us as we developed our new strategy, prompting us to ask:

1. *How can we advocate globally with a unified voice for educational transformation?*
2. *What terminology can bridge academic expertise and general understanding?*
3. *How can we articulate an overarching purpose that unites all ICDE members and showcases our collective impact?*



“In the next four years, we invite all members to share their unique stories of impact and contribute to ICDE’s global arena for sharing of innovation, knowledge and good practices.”

- Torunn Gjelsvik, Secretary General

In response to these questions, we formulated ICDE's purpose statement for 2025-2028: “Together we shape inclusive, scalable and sustainable education”. This declaration encapsulates our “why” – the foundation for impactful storytelling and advocacy.

In the next four years, we invite all members to share their unique stories of impact and contribute to ICDE's global arena for sharing of innovation, knowledge and good practices. There are many ways to actively engage: from taking part in an advocacy task force or network to presenting at one of our international events or developing a service or knowledge product that will help others to excel and innovate. The main return of investment for your engagement is the exchange and connection with a global community of peers and experts. ICDE's mission is to enable and empower members to innovate, transform and sustain their educational provision with local relevance in a global context.

International collaboration is essential as we navigate the uncertainties of the future. This is why the first word in our new purpose statement is ‘together’—emphasizing that our collective efforts will guide us toward a better tomorrow. Your involvement not only enriches our community but also shapes the future of education. By sharing your expertise and impactful stories, you contribute to making education more inclusive, scalable, and sustainable.

Handwritten signature of Torunn Gjelsvik in black ink.

Torunn Gjelsvik
ICDE Secretary General

This is ICDE



340+ members and partners



90+ countries in all world regions



Impacting over **15 million students** across all continents



Non-profit NGO hosted by **Norway**



Consultative partnership with **UNESCO** since 1967



4 employees, **4** different languages

Our work includes:

- Creating a worldwide network of educators, policy-makers, and innovators who collaborate on projects and initiatives, sharing best practices and industry knowledge.
- Publishing and contributing to reports, surveys and articles on emerging topics in the field of inclusive, scalable and sustainable education.
- Facilitating borderless collaboration at our conferences, summits, and events.
- Campaigning and advocating for progress and recognition of inclusive education on a worldwide basis, through our members.

History of ICDE

Support from Norway

Making education accessible to all for over 85 years

For more than eight decades, ICDE has been the leading global organisation for inclusive, scalable and sustainable education. Founded in 1938 in Canada as the International Council for Correspondence Education (ICCE), the organisation has continually evolved to meet the changing needs of learners worldwide.

Since 1938, the biannual ICDE World Conference has fostered global collaboration, with hosting responsibilities awarded to member institutions around the world.

A defining moment in ICDE's history came in 1988, when the 14th ICDE World Conference was held in Oslo, Norway. As well as celebrating the organisation's 50th anniversary, this year saw the establishment of a permanent Secretariat in Oslo, supported by funding from the Norwegian government.

From the era of handwritten correspondence to today's digital innovations, ICDE has been at the forefront of advancing inclusive and equitable education. As technology and learning methods continue to evolve, our mission remains unchanged: to ensure that quality education is made accessible to all.



2020-2022

As a response to the COVID-19 outbreak, ICDE launched #LearningTogether campaign and organised its first virtual conference.



2024

Members gather in Geneva for the ICDE Leadership Summit 2024 to discuss new technologies, ethics and the future of education.

Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills (HK-Dir)

For over 35 years, the Norwegian Government has provided ICDE with an annual grant to support its operations for the international development of inclusive, scalable and sustainable education. This grant is administered by the Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills (HK-Dir), the executive agency for the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research.

In line with the grant, ICDE bridges the connections between Norwegian institutions and the international community with expertise within online and flexible learning.

In 2024, the ICDE Secretariat had meetings with two HK-Dir departments under the Division of Higher Education and Research: the Department of Innovation in Education and the Department of International Collaboration and Capacity Building.

During these meetings, the Secretariat presented ICDE's work and initiatives, and gained further insights into HK-Dir's priorities and projects, finding synergies and identifying opportunities for increased collaboration in the future.



1938

ICDE was founded in 1938 in Canada as the International Council for Correspondence Education (ICCE).



1967

The start of ICCE's official partnership with UNESCO. Two years later, the 8th ICCE conference is held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris.



1988

ICDE World Conference in Oslo, with keynote speech from the Prime Minister. ICDE is invited to establish a permanent Secretariat in Norway.

ICDE Activity Across the Globe

Throughout the year, the ICDE Secretariat and Board members actively participated in 16 events in **13** different countries across 6 world regions.

Our main event was the ICDE Leadership Summit in Geneva, Switzerland, which gathered international leaders in education to reflect together on the topic of AI and ethics in Higher Education.

1. China

The Secretary General was an invited speaker to the 2024 World Digital Education Conference in Shanghai in January and the Global Smart Education Conference in Beijing in August. President Mark Nichols represented ICDE speaking at the International Conference on Building a Learning Society through Digitisation of Open Education hosted by the Open University of China in Beijing in June, and Board member Melinda Bandalaria represented at the International Conference on Digital Lifelong Learning in Shanghai in October.

2. Kenya

ICDE launched the Africa task force of the ICDE Global Advocacy Campaign during the African Council for Distance Education (ACDE) Conference in March, represented by ICDE Board Member Mpine Makoe.

3. France

Senior Adviser Sophia Javaid attended the UNESCO Global Education Coalition

meeting in Paris in March.

4. Rwanda

The Secretary General participated in two pre-conference workshops at eLearning Africa in May 2024, which took place in Rwanda's capital, Kigali.

5. Switzerland

ICDE Institutional Member, Globethics, hosted the ICDE Leadership Summit 2024 in Geneva in June. The conference theme was "Ethical Leadership in the Age of AI: Rethinking Futures of Education". The conference also hosted the official launch of the ICDE Technology and Innovation Network (TIN). The ICDE Board and Secretariat met in-person to prepare the ICDE Strategic Plan 2025-2028.

6. Norway

The ICDE Secretariat attended the ICONS Summit: *Empowering e-inclusive education worldwide* in Oslo with the Secretary General as an invited panelist.

7. Portugal

The kick-off meeting of the ICDE Portuguese OER Project took place in Lisbon in June. Senior Adviser Anaïs Malbrand represented the Secretariat.

8. Brazil

ICDE President Mark Nichols was an invited keynote speaker at the CIAED conference in Brasilia in September, organised by the Brazilian Association for Distance Education - ABED.

9. New Zealand

In October, ICDE Secretary General Torunn Gjelsvik travelled to Wellington for

a site visit in preparation of the 30th ICDE World Conference in 2025. While in New Zealand, she met with university leaders, government officials and other stakeholders, as well as the conference hosts.

10. Cyprus

Senior Adviser Sophia Javaid attended the EADTU Conference 2024 in Cyprus in October, where she presented the ICDE Global Advocacy Campaign and call for a regional task force for Europe.

11. Thailand

ICDE Secretary General Torunn Gjelsvik and Communication and Administration Adviser Anna Fredriksen attended the ICDBSE2024, organised in Bangkok in November by institutional member Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University (STOU). ICDE contributed as

partners and with presentations in the programme. A task force meeting for the Asia Global Advocacy task force was organised together with Board member and co-lead Melinda Bandalaria

12. United Arab Emirates

The Secretary General was an invited panelist and attended the *3rd UNESCO OER World Congress* in Dubai in November.

13. Germany

The Secretary General moderated a panel session with participation from 6 ICDE members at the OEB Conference in Berlin in November.

The Year 2024 in Highlights



Secretary General Torunn Gjelsvik attended the 2024 Global Smart Education Conference in Beijing.



Senior Advisor Sophia Javaid presenting the ICDE Global Advocacy Campaign at EADTU's I-HE2024 conference in Cyprus.



The Secretary General was an invited panelist at the ICONS Summit: Empowering e-inclusive education worldwide in Oslo in June.



ICDE Secretary General Torunn Gjelsvik represented ICDE at the 3rd UNESCO World OER Congress 2024 in Dubai together with ICDE Board member and Chair of the ICDE OER Advocacy Committee Ebba Ossiannilsson and OERAC Ambassador Chadia Mansour.



The ICDE Secretariat and Board Members gathered in Geneva to develop the ICDE Strategic Plan 2025-2028, supported by consultant Jan Fredrik Bjørntvedt.



The ICDE Secretariat and Flexible Education Norway during the 2024 Christmas Party.



Meeting of the Global Advocacy Campaign (GAC) Asia task force during the ICDBSE Conference in Bangkok, Thailand in November. ICDE was an event partner, with ICDE Secretary General Torunn Gjelsvik and Communication Adviser Anna Fredriksen attending. Both the Secretary General and Board Member Melinda Bandalaria were speakers at the event.

2024 ICDE Events

ICDE Leadership Summit 2024

The ICDE Leadership Summit brings together educational leaders, experts and organisations to share knowledge and views about policy, strategic thinking and leadership developments within the field of inclusive education globally.

The Leadership Summit 2024 took place on June 4-6, in Geneva, Switzerland. It explored the theme: “Ethical Leadership in the Age of AI: Rethinking Futures of Education” and was hosted by ICDE member Globethics.

Over 120 participants from 35 countries attended and ICDE members were well-represented in the conference programme, both in plenary and parallel sessions. ICDE partner UNESCO and ICDE member the Open University of China contributed at the top leadership level with keynotes.

Conference delegates shared personal insights and recommendations which resulted in the creation of a Living Letter on Ethics of AI in Higher Education. The ICDE Leadership Summit 2024 [Policy Dialogue Report](#) titled: “Navigating the Future of Higher Education with AI” was published by Globethics on 4 September.



ICDE Global Presidents' Forum 2024

The ICDE Global Presidents' Forum (GPF) is an annual high-level event exclusively for executive leaders of ICDE member institutions and organizations. The 2024 forum, held virtually on December 5, featured two sessions to accommodate different time zones. Led by ICDE President Mark Nichols and Board members, the GPF 2024 focused on the official launch of the ICDE Strategic Plan 2025-2028.

The forum's primary purpose is to facilitate knowledge sharing, best practices, and experiences among top-level leadership of ICDE member institutions globally. Participants discussed the implementation of the new strategy, which emphasizes shaping inclusive, scalable, and sustainable education. This strategic direction reflects ICDE's evolution from focusing solely on open and distance education to encompassing a broader range of innovative educational approaches.

The GPF 2024 also addressed the need for a “brand refresh” for ICDE, a conclusion drawn from the GPF 2023. This refresh aligns with ICDE's new purpose statement: “Together we shape inclusive, scalable and sustainable education,” which aims to incorporate diverse voices and be more deliberate about educational objectives. [Read the summary report for the GPF 2024.](#)

Looking ahead, the GPF 2025 is scheduled for November 10, 2025, as an in-person pre-event to the ICDE World Conference 2025 in Wellington, New Zealand.



GLOBAL PRESIDENTS' FORUM 2024



ICDE's expanding community in 2024

As the strategic period came to an end, ICDE celebrated its biggest achievement yet in its efforts to achieve Strategic Objective two - extending the global reach of the ICDE membership to underrepresented regions and stakeholders.

New Partnerships

ICDE welcomed four diverse partners, each representing different regions and stakeholders within the field of inclusive education.

- **Aga Khan Foundation** - AKF was founded in 1967 to address the root causes of poverty and support community institutions to carry out sustainable, locally-driven initiatives that improve the quality of life. Their open online course platform, the Learning Hub brings high-quality, low-cost education to anyone, anywhere.
- **UNESCO-ICHEI** - The International Centre for Higher Education Innovation under the auspices of UNESCO was founded in 2016 and is located in Shenzhen, China. Their mission is to expand quality and equitable education opportunities, addressing the need for the digital transformation in higher education institutions in developing countries in Asia and Africa.
- **The International Community of Online Schools** - Established in 2023 in Belgium, this growing initiative was born from the increasing need for quality inclusive online education worldwide. ICONS aims to become the global voice of online K-12 level schools, to engage with policy-makers, academia, edtech companies, students and parents.
- **ACODE** - The Australasian Council for Open and Digital Education serves universities engaged or interested in technology enhanced learning and teaching. Since 1993, their mission has been to enhance policy and practice in Australasian higher education at institutional, national and international levels.



Sophia Javaid (right) with members at the ICDE Leadership Summit 2024.

“Our expanded community reflects ICDE’s increasing influence and reach, connecting a diverse network of educators and learners across 92 countries and every corner of the globe. We are proud to foster a vibrant community that champions inclusive, scalable and sustainable education worldwide.”

- Sophia Javaid, ICDE Senior Adviser for Membership and Communication

ICDE Membership 2024



Institutional

Total: 194
New: 28



Individual

Total: 48
New: 18



Students

Total: 96
New: 31



Honorary

Total: 15

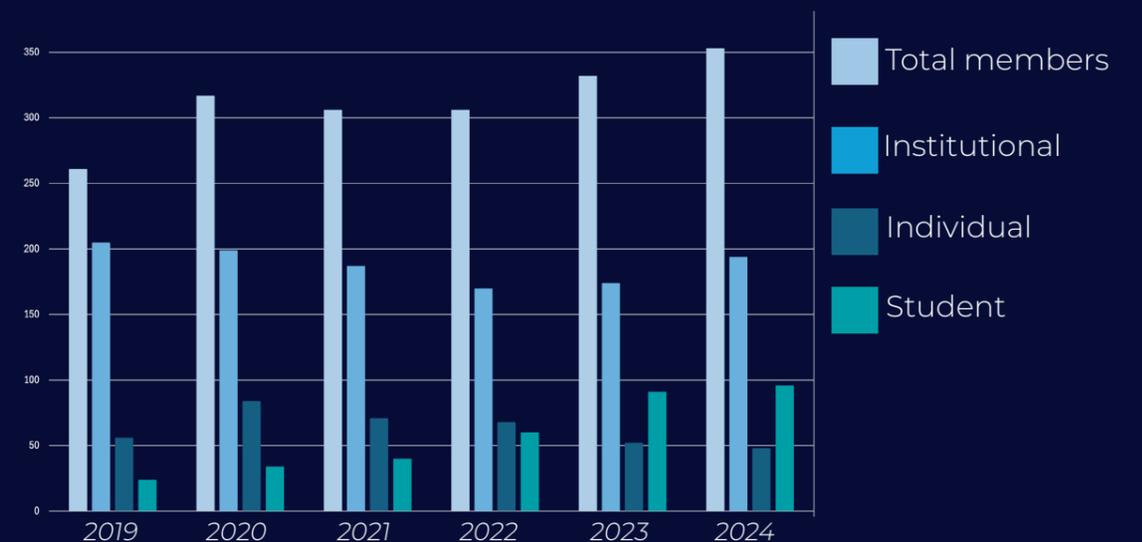
New Members

ICDE's global reach grew significantly in 2024, with 77 new members joining across our three categories. Of the 28 new institutional members, half are from the strategically targeted regions of Oceania, Africa, and South America, highlighting our commitment to inclusive global growth.

In 2024, ICDE's global community flourished, reaching an impressive 353 members. This surge marks our second-highest membership in recent history, surpassed only by the peak levels of 2018. We witnessed significant growth in our institutional and student memberships, building upon the positive momentum of 2023. While our individual membership remained robust, it experienced a minor adjustment of four members.

ICDE's growth was fueled by several key initiatives, most notably the continued targeted recruitment with a specific emphasis on Oceania at the end of the year supporting preparations for the ICDE World Conference 2025 in New Zealand.

ICDE Membership 2019 - 2024



Engagement with UNESCO in 2024

ICDE has been in a formal consultative partnership with UNESCO since 1967. As the oldest and only global membership association specializing in open, flexible and distance education, ICDE has proven its relevance by supporting UNESCO through changing times, policies, pedagogies and technologies.

The ICDE consultative partnership grants ICDE members a voice at UNESCO and links them to relevant global policies. As awareness and commitment to the United Nations sustainable development agenda becomes more strategically pertinent to educational actors, the ICDE consultative partnership status with UNESCO is highly valued by our community.

A few highlights from ICDE's engagement with UNESCO during 2024:

- The ICDE OER Portuguese Project, building on the ICDE OER Francophone project, was launched in April 2024 with the support from UNESCO
- Collaboration with UNESCO IITE - Institute for Information Technologies in Education and UNESCO UIL - Institute for Lifelong Learning through ICDE's partnership with the Global Smart Education Network and the Global Network for Digitalization in Lifelong Learning.
- A Memorandum of Action signed with UNESCO ICHEI - International Centre for Higher Education Innovation under the auspices of UNESCO
- The ICDE Secretary General was an invited speaker at the third UNESCO World OER Congress in Dubai in November, representing the UNESCO OER Dynamic Coalition, where ICDE has been a member since 2020.



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Communication and Social Media in 2024

In 2024, ICDE continued to strengthen its communication efforts, ensuring engagement with members and the wider community through various digital platforms, campaigns and initiatives.



ICDE's AI Week 2024

For the first time ever, ICDE ran a week-long campaign dedicated to the topic of AI. Between 24-28 June 2024, ICDE hosted two virtual events and shared AI-focused content developed by our members through its social media and newsletter - reaching over 13,800 individuals organically. The campaign was a direct response to the engaging conversations and learning which had taken place at the ICDE Leadership Summit 2024 in Geneva earlier that month, where the theme was "Ethical Leadership in the Age of AI: Rethinking Futures of Education".



Leaders & Legends of Online Learning

In 2024, ICDE was a proud sponsor of the **Leaders and Legends of Online Learning podcast**, founded and hosted by ICDE

President Mark Nichols. The podcast celebrated a major milestone in 2024 with the release of its 100th episode, which featured an insightful conversation between host Mark Nichols and renowned expert in online and distance education, Tony Bates - who was Mark's first guest on the podcast in 2018.

Website enhancement



Following the launch of ICDE's new website in 2023, the Secretariat focused on evaluating its performance, understanding user behaviour, and identifying areas for improvement. The team also considered changes needed with the launch of the new ICDE Strategic Plan 2025-2028. The website is being measured and monitored, and development work will continue into 2025.

2024 Statistics

Facebook followers:

2023: 4,693

2024: 4,971

LinkedIn followers:

2023: 3,271

2024: 4,199

Twitter/X followers:

2023: 5,842

2024: 5,778

Newsletter subscribers:

2023: 12,726

2024: 12,883

Website visits:

2023: 45,991

2024: 47,996

ICDE Projects and Activities in 2024

Strengthening Global Advocacy: Key Milestones in 2024

2024 marked the third year of the [ICDE Global Advocacy Campaign \(GAC\)](#), highlighting ICDE's continued effort toward advancing equitable access to quality learning opportunities worldwide through regional task forces.

In March, the **Task Force for Africa** was officially launched at the African Council for Distance Education (ACDE) conference in Kenya. The launch event gathered leaders from over ten key institutions in the region, all supporting the aims of the task force and campaign.

In May, ICDE launched the **Task Force for North America**, with the Online Learning Consortium (OLC) as the lead. The launch meeting brought together a strong group of engaged members, eager to contribute to the campaign. Discussions centered on key priorities and possible activities, laying the foundation for collaborative efforts in 2025.

November saw a significant development in the **Asia task force**, with an in-person meeting during the ICDBSE2024 conference in Thailand, hosted by Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University (STOU). Attended by ICDE Secretary General Torunn Gjelsvik and Communication Adviser Anna Fredriksen, along with 21 representatives from six ICDE member institutions, the meeting led to a strategic reorganization. The task force was restructured into three sub-groups: Policy, Collaboration and Digital Platform.



ICDE Technology and Innovation Network

To further ICDE's commitment to Strategic Objective #3—Maximizing member value through quality, OER, and educational innovation, the ICDE Technology and Innovation Network (TIN) was launched in 2024. Notably, TIN is ICDE's first network to offer unrestricted membership to all categories, including students, reflecting a dedication to broad engagement.



Introduced at the ICDE Leadership Summit in Geneva, TIN rapidly grew to over 70 members, demonstrating its strong appeal. The network provides a dynamic environment for collaboration, knowledge dissemination, and the exploration of key areas like AI-enabled learning, cross-institutional collaboration, and 'glocalization' in education.



TIN activities include online meetings, joint problem-solving, and the sharing of effective practices. The network aims to gather members into sub-groups each aimed at tackling a different element to the challenges ahead within the areas of technology and innovation. Their international collaboration will be virtual, leading to an in person workshop planned for the ICDE World Conference in 2025. ICDE institutional member, The University of Southern Queensland (UniSQ), leads the network with Dr. Julie Lindsay as Chair in its initial phase.



TIN launch at the ICDE Leadership Summit 2024

ICDE Global Doctoral Consortium

The ICDE Global Doctoral Consortium (GDC) continued with a programme of virtual events in early 2024 and was proud to welcome ICDE Institutional member, Anadolu University as the latest Core Partner of the initiative, bringing the total to five institutions from a range of world regions. The focus of the GDC in the latter part of the year turned to preparations for an international doctoral symposium to be held at the ICDE World Conference 2025.



ICDE Projects and Activities in 2024

Open Praxis

Open Praxis is ICDE's peer-reviewed open access scholarly journal focusing on research and innovation in open, flexible and distance education. The aim of Open Praxis is to provide a platform for global collaboration and discussion of issues in the practice of the field.



The journal is hosted by ICDE institutional member Anadolu University from Türkiye. The editorial team since 2023, led by Editor in Chief Prof. Aras Bozkurt, has continued to mobilize reviewers and authors, secured continuous publication of articles and issues and improved the journal's online presence through social media.

In 2024, Open Praxis was officially indexed by SCOPUS - a significant quality achievement. The inclusion of Open Praxis in SCOPUS signifies that the work of contributing authors is reaching a broader audience, with their scholarly contributions recognized and valued by a leading academic database. This indexing is also indicative of the journal's impact in the field of open, online, and distance education.

“This achievement is a testament to a collective effort - spanning the past and present editorial team and board, the social media team, layout editors, readers, and most importantly, the contributing authors and reviewers, whose insights and feedback enhance the quality of each publication.”

- Aras Bozkurt, Editor of Open Praxis

Open Praxis welcomes contributions demonstrating creative and innovative research, particularly emphasizing challenges, lessons, and achievements in the practice of open, online, and distance education worldwide, with a special focus on higher education and K-12. Articles may present research, surveys of recent work, original studies, or discussions on new technology and its broader implications.



To reflect its international scope, contributions are expected to be geographically and institutionally diverse and balanced.

In 2024, four volumes of the journal were published. More information at openpraxis.org

ENCORE+

ENCORE+ was a three-year Erasmus+ project co-funded by the European Commission in the period 2021 to 2023. The project supported the uptake and innovation of Open Educational Resources (OER) for Education and Business, involved 9 different partners from academia and business, and was coordinated by ICDE.



In May 2024, ICDE received the final approval of the project report and budget from the European Commission. The report assessment gave good ratings and stated that the project actively contributes to the Higher Education Modernisation Agenda and the Education and Training 2020 (ET2020) framework by promoting the uptake of OER. Furthermore, the assessment concludes that the ENCORE + project has contributed to strengthening Europe's innovation capacity and established a robust alliance between higher education institutions and businesses, evidenced by the collaboration in developing and disseminating OER strategies and practices.

With regards to policy impact, the assessment states that the ENCORE+ project has provided significant inputs for policy development at local, regional, national, and European levels. The project's findings and recommendations can help policymakers understand the benefits and challenges of implementing OER more broadly, and by demonstrating the economic and educational benefits of OER, the project supports policy arguments for increased funding and support for OER initiatives. All project research and reports are published on the [project website](#).

Several follow up activities from the project have been initiated by the project partners in 2024. A virtual event about OER and AI competencies was organised in June, and two academic papers have been published based on work from the ENCORE+ work package on innovation (Rob Farrow et. al.).

ENCORE+ Project Partners



ICDE Projects and Activities in 2024



ICDE Portuguese OER Project

The ICDE Portuguese OER Project was launched in April 2024, building on the existing network and courses created within the ICDE OER Francophone project. Supported by UNESCO, the project continues the focus on OER capacity building and digital competency development, now aiming to reach Portuguese speaking countries in Africa and Latin America.

In 2024, both introductory and policy-focused versions of the OER course were translated for Portuguese speakers and hosted on the Open University of Portugal's Moodle platform, with careful cultural adjustments. The courses were adapted within a partnership with the Open University of Portugal (Universidade Aberta) and the French Digital University (l'Université Numérique). They are quality assured by the ICDE OER expert working group for Portuguese speaking countries with representatives from Brazil, Cabo Verde, Mozambique, Angola, Portugal, and São Tomé and Príncipe, launched. Intellectual property rights in Portuguese-speaking African countries have been reviewed in collaboration with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), while ICDE member and partner ABED (Brazilian Association for Distance Education), is ensuring the courses align with Brazilian legal and educational regulations.

The courses, designed for accessibility and usability, follow international standards and the host university's pedagogical model, and can be adapted across Portuguese-speaking countries. Quality checked additional Portuguese-language OER materials were identified and integrated as supplementary content.

Both OER capacity building projects for Francophone and Portuguese-speaking countries were disseminated within ICDE networks and at key international events.



Project partners at the ICDE Portuguese OER Project kick-off meeting in Lisbon. From left: Diogo Casa Nova, Anais Røed Malbrand and Jacques Dang.

ICDE Quality Network 2024

The Quality Network informs and advises ICDE's members on quality assurance and quality enhancement of open, flexible, distance and technology enhanced education, and represents institutional members of ICDE from all world regions.

In 2024, the network Chair Dr Souma Alhaj Ali has continued to encourage and lead the network members in developing a range of resources and activities relevant to ICDE's strategic priorities and main objectives:

- The **Quality Resources** section in the members' area of ICDE's website has been further developed with quality resources from various regions, including introductions and cross-references.
- The Quality Network was well represented with 5 Focal Points present at the **ICDE Leadership Summit** in Geneva in June, titled: "*Ethical Leadership in the Age of AI: Rethinking Futures of Education*". Academic integrity and quality assurance in relation to AI were highly addressed and sparked some good discussions regarding both challenges and potential for AI in education.
- A webinar hosted by the Quality Network in October built on the discussions and takeaways from the Geneva conference under the headline: "*AI in Action: Applicable AI for Education*". The webinar attracted almost 250 registered participants and demonstrated the need for practical approaches on how to implement AI in education, in addition to guiding policies.
- In the **2024 Quality Network report**, the regional Focal Points outline the application of AI in education from their regional perspectives. This includes the status of adoption and implementation of AI, its impact on quality, learners' experience, access, and efficiency, as well as risks and challenges, good practices and recommendations.

The 7 Regional Focal Points of the Quality Network in 2024 were:

- **African Region:** Prof. Obhajajie Juliet Inegbedion, Director of Quality Assurance, National Open University of Nigeria
- **Latin American Region:** Mary Morocho Quezada, UTPL (Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja) and CALED (Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Quality in Higher Distance Education), Ecuador
- **Arab Region:** Prof. Moustafa Hassan, Vice Chancellor for International Cooperation, Hamdan Bin Mohammed Smart University, United Arab Emirates
- **European Region:** George Ubachs, Managing Director, EADTU (European Association of Distance Teaching Universities), Netherlands
- **Asian Region:** Prof. Ojat Darajat, Rector of Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia
- **North American Region:** Dylan Barth, Vice President of Innovation and Programs, OLC (Online Learning Consortium), USA
- **Oceania Region:** Dr Rajni Chand, Director Centre for Flexible Learning, University of the South Pacific, Fiji

ICDE OER Advocacy Committee 2024

The renewed ICDE OER Advocacy Committee (OERAC) for 2023-2024 comprised representatives from six world regions and worked towards four key milestones:

- Simplified messaging on OER value and storytelling
- Curated [OER resources for the ICDE Knowledge Hub](#)
- “Ask the ICDE Experts” event
- Strategic advice for the ICDE Strategic Plan 2025-2028

In 2024, the Committee focused on OER and AI, engaging in consultations, presentations, panel discussions, research, and publications. The OERAC participated in major ICDE events and developed the open Knowledge Hub for OER on the ICDE website.

The Committee also contributed to the UNESCO Dubai OER Declaration, with members supporting the UNESCO survey, panel discussions, and participation in the Program Committee. A joint article was published in Open Praxis (2024). At the end of their mandate a key recommendation from the OERAC was to enhance collaboration with members, align with broader open education initiatives, and integrate AI into OER strategies.



Ebba Ossiannilsson
ICDE Board Member and
OERAC Chair



Promotional poster for the *Ask the OERAC Experts* event on 10 December 2024

OER Advocacy Committee Ambassadors

The ICDE OER Advocacy Committee consisted of representatives from 6 different world regions and included the following Ambassadors in 2024:

Ebba Ossiannilsson, Professor, Dr. Consultant and VP, Swedish Association for Open, Flexible and Distance Education (SADE), Sweden, (Chair)

Melinda de la Pena Bandalaria, Chancellor and Professor, University of the Philippines Open University, Philippines

Xiangyang Zhang, Emeritus Professor, Open University of Jiangsu, China

Jozefa Fawcett, Learning Specialist Consultant, UK

Constance Blomgren, Associate Professor, Athabasca University, Canada

Chadia Mansour, ICDE Student Member, Athabasca University, Canada

Rosa Leonor Ulloa Cazarez, Professor, Universidad de Guadalajara, Mexico

Cristine Gusmao, Associate Professor, Federal University of Pernambuco, Brazil

Lilia Cheniti, Associate Professor, Sousse University, Tunisia

Claire Goode, Learning and Teaching Specialist / Principal Lecturer, Otago Polytechnic, New Zealand

Richard Kajumbula, Associate Lecturer and Program Manager, Makerere University, Uganda

Financial Briefing

About the ICDE Control Committee

The **ICDE Control Committee** shall ensure that ICDE's funds are used in accordance with applicable law, decisions and grants, and that the financial dispositions made are in accordance with the Constitution of ICDE and relevant board resolutions. The ICDE Control Committee shall further ensure that the internal financial control of the Secretary General is appropriate and justifiable.

The Control Committee has tasks that go beyond what an external auditor is concerned and must therefore carry out its own information gathering and checks in addition to the auditor's work.

The Control Committee shall ensure that the accounting is reliable and that the annual accounts and interim reports give a correct expression of ICDE's operations and financial position. When reviewing the accounts, the control committee shall assess the financial position, management and operation of ICDE.

Comments of the Control Committee to the 2024 Accounts

The Control Committee has reviewed the minutes of the Board, as well as other documents the Committee has found necessary to review. The Control Committee has received all the information that was requested from the Secretary General and from ICDE's auditor Grant Thornton. The Annual Accounts for 2024 have also been reviewed.

The material presented to the ICDE Control Committee does not give rise to comments other than what is already stated in the notes of the accounts, and the Control Committee recommended that the Annual Accounts for 2024 is to be approved by the Board.

Malaysia/Ecuador/Norway, 25 February 2025

Ansary Ahmed, Santiago Acosta Aide, Mette Villand, Snorre Qveim-Leikanger (Acting Chair)

ICDE Control Committee

ICDE Governance Activities in 2024

2024 was a year of strategic planning which resulted in the launch of the new ICDE Strategy 2025-2028, during the ICDE Global President Forum that took place on 5 December.

The newly elected and re-elected members of the ICDE Board took office from 1 January 2024 and the new ICDE President Mark Nichols was elected during their first meeting on February 7.

The current ICDE Board is composed of the following members:



Mark Nichols (President)
New Zealand



Mpine Makoe
South Africa



Ebba Ossiannilsson
Sweden



Andreia Inamorato (Individual member representative)
Brazil/Spain



Neil Fassina
Canada



Melinda Bandalaria
Philippines

ICDE Board Meetings

The ICDE Board met five times throughout the year. One of the meetings took place face-to-face in conjunction with the ICDE Leadership Summit in Geneva. This face-to-face meeting was entirely dedicated to the development of the new ICDE Strategic Plan.

Other meetings led to key updates and governance decisions impacting activities for 2024.

ICDE members can access the ICDE Board minutes for 2024 on the **ICDE Members Area**.

ICDE Permanent Secretariat Staff in 2024



Torunn Gjelsvik
Secretary General



Anaïs Malbrand
Senior Adviser
for Projects and
Events



Sophia Javid
Senior Adviser for
Membership and
Communication



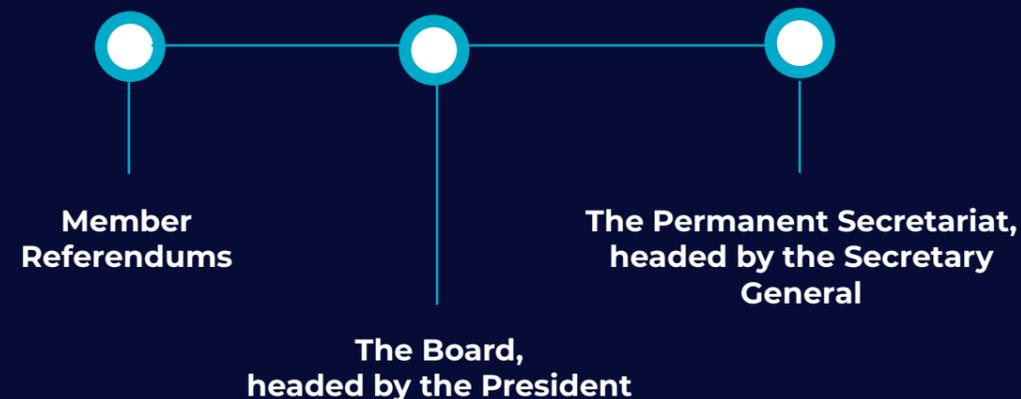
Anna Fredriksen
Communication
and Administration
Adviser



Juliane Granly
Project and
Development
Manager
Until February 2024

Organisation

ICDE is an independent, self-governing, non-profit and non-governmental legal entity. The association is governed by the following business bodies:



In addition, the Board is supported by the **Control Committee** and the **Nomination Committee**.

ICDE Board 2024



ICDE President: Mark Nichols
Executive Director, Open Polytechnic,
New Zealand



Melinda Bandalaria
Chancellor, University of the Philippines
Open University, Philippines



Neil Fassina
President, Okanagan College Canada



Andreia Inamorato
Executive Director, University of Loyola,
Spain *(Representing individual
members)*



Mpine Makoe
Executive Dean, College of Education,
UNISA, South Africa



Ebba Ossiannilsson
Former Vice-President, Swedish Asso-
ciation for Open, Flexible and Distance
Education, Sweden

ICDE Control Committee 2024:

- Tian Belawati, Indonesia (Acting Chair)
- Santiago Acosta Aide, Ecuador
- Mette Villand, Norway
- Snorre Qveim-Leikanger, Attorney at Law, Norway

ICDE Nomination Committee 2024:

- Asha Singh Kanwar, Canada (Chair)
- Mandla Stanley Makhanya, South Africa
- Torhild Slaatto, Norway



INTERNATIONAL
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DISTANCE EDUCATION

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